

**Herts for Learning  
Early Years Quality Standards (EYQS)  
Sauncey Wood Primary School  
2019 Case study**



Herts for Learning  
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## **Early Years Quality Standards (EYQS) – Sauncey Wood Primary School**

### **Summary of impact and outcomes**

#### **Introduction**

Sauncey Wood Primary School is a one-form entry with around 190 children situated on spacious grounds in Batford, Harpenden. The school has a high percentage of Pupil Premium children. There is also a speech, language and communication needs base on site for Key Stage 2 children. The children generally start with the school working at below age-related expectations and parental engagement can be challenging but the staff work hard to ensure they work in partnership with the parents.

The school felt that their Early Years provision was outstanding and their outcomes for progress reflected this. Children's Good Level of Development (GLD) has increased year-on-year and the staff are a secure team who deliver the best provision for the children. All of the learning that takes place is child-centred and led by the children's interests. The school, however, realised that there was an opportunity to complete the Gold Standard in the EYQS programme, having already completed the Silver standard previously.

#### **What is EYQS?**

The EYQS is a year-long programme that supports self-evaluation, reflective practice, action planning and high-quality provision to improve outcomes for all children. It involves working with parents, children and staff to make changes and to develop practice. The process takes approximately one year to complete, depending on the level of standard chosen. Once accepted onto the scheme, each setting works towards completing the process within the next academic year, from September, and all schools and settings finish and attend a celebration event at the end of following summer term.

#### **Developments at the school**

At Sauncey Wood Primary School, trends have shown that speech and language is becoming an ever-growing barrier for many children year-after-year. The school wanted a project that supported both speaking, listening and storytelling to support the development of core literacy skills. Many of their children start at the school with poor language skills and are unfamiliar with simple stories. The Early Years practitioners needed to engage parents with a hands-on project that would support their children. Language and communication was the obvious choice for the school.

The idea of a story box has been developed and used by other classes who have created whole worlds to support their story telling and writing. The story box project is now taking place yearly to help develop positive relationships with parents and engage their children in their speaking and listening and ability to retell familiar stories.

The project helped the school develop links and relationships with some hard-to-reach and disengaged parents. It broke down barriers and any negative experiences that the parents may have had themselves at school. Being able to retell familiar stories was a bonus as it meant children quickly noticed key themes, characters and events, which will help them in their reading and writing as they transition through the school.

## **Impact**

The project had significant impact: at the start of the project, eight children were not on track to achieve a good level of development. As a result of progress made, five of these children were predicted to achieve a GLD. All children in the project made at least two steps of progress in at least two areas across the spring term alone.

Other impact of the project included:

- as a result of the success of the parental engagement encouraged through the project in the Early Years, the deputy has set up a 'reading café' for children and their families across the school inviting families to come into school to share learning opportunities with their child
- story boxes were introduced into the classroom for all children to access. The children that had been involved in the project were used as 'the experts' and they shared their expertise with their peers. The EYFS leader reported that this had a notable impact on raising their self-esteem
- the EYFS leader noted that children involved in the project demonstrated far greater story telling skills when accessing small world play
- parents responded to suggestions of how to use the story boxes at home



## **Support**

The process was supportive with clear expectations for achieving Gold standard. The school was given enough freedom to run a project that suited and developed their setting. The EYQS team were supportive and offered advice and support, which helped them to be reflective and constructively critical of their practice to enable us to make changes and move forward. The support was useful and the school valued the dialogue between themselves and the Herts for Learning Early Years team.

### **Let's celebrate**

After achieving their Gold Standard, the preschool attended a nursery rhyme themed celebration event in July 2018. At the event, they had the chance to meet over 70 practitioners from 23 different Early Years settings, who took part in either Bronze, Silver or Gold Standard, to discuss the impact of their work and to hear the achievements in other school.

The practitioners, who attended the event, found the celebration very beneficial as it offered them the chance to see projects and ideas from other schools and settings. It is important to the school that Early Years is celebrated and identified as a key area in a child's educational journey.

### **Recommendation**

Speaking about whether they would recommend the EYQS to other schools, Deputy Headteacher, Jade Harkness said: "The process is all about self-evaluation and being reflective as practitioners. If they believe in their team and that are delivering the best provision for their children, the EYQS journey is the best way to highlight what you are doing well and gives you next steps to develop."

### **How to register**

If you are interested in taking part in the 2019/20 HfL Early Years Quality Standards, please send an email to [eyquality@hertsforlearning.co.uk](mailto:eyquality@hertsforlearning.co.uk).

If you have any further queries or require any further information, please email [eyquality@hertsforlearning.co.uk](mailto:eyquality@hertsforlearning.co.uk).

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